

*12/10/63 memo by sent to
DCI*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 5, 1963.

Bud,

Attached for your information is an official copy of the latest draft of the press release which we prepared earlier this week. I have also forwarded a copy of the draft to Gene Fubini for his comments and have informed him that it is acceptable to CIA with the exception of the next to last paragraph which Mr. McCone wants deleted in its entirety.

Spurgeon Keeny

FORM NO. 237
2-61

25X1

COPY
DRAFT
TOP SECRET
27 November 1963

25X1

WHITE HOUSE PRESS RELEASE
STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The United States has successfully flown an advanced jet aircraft, the X____, in sustained flight at more than three times the speed of sound. The performance of the X____, which was developed by the Central Intelligence Agency to improve our reconnaissance capabilities, far exceeds that of any other aircraft in the world today. The development of this aircraft has been made possible by major advances in aircraft technology of great significance for both military and civilian applications. The existence of this program is being disclosed at this time to permit the orderly exploitation of this advanced technology in other military and civilian programs. A public fly-by of the X____ is scheduled for _____ at Edwards Air Force Base.

In furtherance of its responsibility for the collection of intelligence information, the Central Intelligence Agency in 1959 initiated a program to develop new aircraft that would be capable of sustained flight at three times the speed of sound at high altitude. The project has been vigorously supported by both the previous and the present Administrations. Appropriate members of the Senate and House have been kept fully informed on this program since its inception.

TOP SECRET

Retyped 20 Jan. 64 with minor changes by Dr. Wheelon

25X1

25X1

cy # 2

TOP SECRET

25X1

25X1

-2-

The flight test program, which began in the spring of 1962, has now culminated in a series of highly successful flights. The Lockheed Aircraft Corporation of Burbank, California, is the manufacturer of the aircraft and the Project Engineer is Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson. The aircraft engine, the J-58, was designed and built by the Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Division of the United Aircraft Corporation.

As the program progressed, it became increasingly apparent that this aircraft, capable of high speed, high altitude, and long-range performance constituted a technical accomplishment that would permit the achievement of a number of important military requirements much sooner than had originally been expected. Applications of possible military interest included military reconnaissance and long range interception of enemy aircraft. The DOD has a current program aimed at the development and procurement of aircraft of the type for military reconnaissance purposes and is studying other applications.

The development of a supersonic commercial transport aircraft will also be greatly assisted by the lessons learned from the X__ program. For example, one of the important technical achievements of this project has been a major advance in the difficult problem of the metallurgy and

TOP SECRET

25X1

TOP SECRET

25X1

-3-

utilization of titanium metal which is required for the high temperatures experienced by aircraft travelling at three times the speed of sound. Arrangements are being made to make this and other important technical developments, under appropriate safeguard, available to all contractors who are bidding on the Supersonic Transport Program.

The X has not been used to perform reconnaissance over foreign territory. It does provide a substantial improvement in our capability to conduct legitimate missions in the national security interest of the United States if this should be necessary. (The use of this aircraft will be subject to the same controls as other reconnaissance aircraft.)-/

In view of the importance of these developments to our national security, the detailed performance of the X will remain strictly classified and all individuals associated with the program have been directed to refrain from making any further public disclosures.

pg 119 ps 1 OS HMB

TOP SECRET

25X1

